

N E W S R E L E A S E

News Release No.: 2014-92

Date: October 2, 2014

Cal/OSHA Helps Firefighters Execute High-Rise Rescue: Window Washers Brought to Safety after Getting Stuck on 18th Floor

Irvine—The combined efforts of Cal/OSHA, Tractel scaffolding company, and the Orange County Fire Department helped ensure two window washers were able to safely exit a 19-story building on Wednesday, October 1.

A Cal/OSHA senior safety engineer was notified around 9 a.m. about a situation at 4 Park Plaza in which washers employed by Newport Window Cleaning had become trapped. Wire rope suspending the cleaning crew's platform frayed, making the rope too wide in diameter for the motorized pulley system to raise or lower it.

The Cal/OSHA safety engineer consulted with Tractel Inc., and advised the Command Chief of the Orange County Fire Department. They secured the workers on the platform with harnesses before raising the platform by hand up to the rooftop.

"Days like this truly make me proud that all the agencies involved in the incident worked together towards one common goal: employee safety," said Christine Baker, Director of the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR). "Their careful attention to the technical complexities in this situation helped save two lives."

Rescue ropes, brakes and pulley systems had to be inspected for any damage before the rescue operation could commence. The trapped workers also assisted Urban Search and Rescue-trained firefighters in securing the rescue equipment to their platform, despite having been trapped in the sun for hours. The rescue operation was completed around 1 p.m.

However, questions remain about what led to the incident in the first place. "It is important that all industrial equipment be checked regularly for deficiencies," said Acting Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum. "Cal/OSHA will be conducting an investigation into how the wire rope problems developed, and why they were not identified before the ropes were put into use on Wednesday."

Cal/OSHA could issue citations and fines as a result of its investigation into the faulty equipment used by Newport Window Cleaning on Wednesday.

Cal/OSHA helps protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace in California. Employers who want to learn more about California workplace health and safety standards or labor law violations can access information on [DIR's website](#) as well as on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Employees with work-related questions or complaints may call the California Workers' Information Hotline at (866) 924-9757 for recorded information in English and Spanish on a variety of work-related topics.

For media inquiries contact Erika Monterroza at (510) 286-1164 or Peter Melton at (510) 286-7046.



The [California Department of Industrial Relations](#), established in 1927, protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners, and helps their employers comply with state labor laws. DIR is housed within the [Labor & Workforce Development Agency](#). Non-media inquiries can contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 1-844-LABOR-DIR (1-844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.